RECLAMATION

Managing Water in the West

Draft Environmental Assessment

Long-Term Water Transfer From the Anderson-Cottonwood Irrigation District to the Shasta Community Services District Mid-Pacific Region

U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Reclamation

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Introduction

The Bureau of Reclamation proposes to approve a long-term Central Valley Project (CVP) water transfer of up to 464 acre-feet per year from the Anderson-Cottonwood Irrigation District (ACID) to the Shasta Community Services District (SCSD) during the period April through October of each water year, beginning with the 2008 water year and continuing through the 2044 water year.

ACID proposes to transfer up to 464 acre-feet of water to SCSD. The transfer is being undertaken pursuant to, and will be in full compliance with, Section 3405(a) of Public Law 102-575, Title 34, of the Central Valley Project Improvement Act (CVPIA).

ACID

ACID is located along Interstate 5 in northern California, between the city of Redding and northern Tehama County, approximately 20 miles south of Redding. ACID entered into a Sacramento River Settlement Contract (Settlement Contract) with Reclamation, Contract Number 14-06-200-3346A-R-1 (Contract 3346A-R-1), on July 1, 2005, with an effective date of April 1, 2005. That contract provided for the diversion of up to 121,000 acre-feet of base supply water and up to 7,000 acre-feet of CVP water each year during the period April through October. ACID assigned 3,000 acre-feet of CVP water to Reclamation on September 28, 2005, thereby reducing the CVP water under contract to 4,000 acre-feet. Article 3(e) of the Settlement Contract provides for transfers of CVP water upon the written consent of Reclamation.

SCSD

SCSD is located along California Highway 299 west of, and adjacent to, the city of Redding. SCSD entered into a 40-year long-term renewal contract with Reclamation, Contract Number 14-06-200-862A-LTR1, on February 25, 2005, with an effective date of March 1, 2005. That contract provides for the diversion of up to 1,000 acre-feet of CVP water each year during the period March of the current calendar year through the last day of February of the following calendar year. Articles 11 and 12 provide CVP water may be reduced, and sub-article 12(d) provides CVP water furnished under the contract will be allocated in accordance with the then-existing CVP Municipal and Industrial Water Shortage Policy.

Physically, SCSD takes its water at Station 98+60 on the Spring Creek Conduit, which conveys water from Whiskeytown Lake to the Spring Creek Power Plant.

Purpose and Need

SCSD

There is an underlying need for an additional water supply in SCSD's service area to meet the need for fire protection and suppression, to supplement the existing supply during times of drought, and to meet the projected increase in demand resulting from continued growth within the SCSD's service area.

Proposed Action and Alternatives

Proposed Action

The proposed action is Reclamation's approval, without further National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) review, of annual transfers of up to 464 acre-feet of CVP water from ACID during the period April through October of each water year, beginning with the 2006 water year and continuing through the 2044 water year. The transfers would be in accordance with Reclamation's current water transfer guidelines. The water would be made available at Station 98+60 on the Spring Creek Conduit.

The transfer would not change CVP operations as the volumes involved equate to an average of about 2.6 cubic feet per second (cfs) during the 6-month April through October period, or a little more than 0.02 percent of the typical summer releases of 12,000 cfs from the Shasta Dam to the Sacramento River.

Alternative One – Review Annual Transfer Requests

This alternative is the same as the proposed action except the proposed transfers and associated NEPA compliance would be reviewed and prepared on an annual basis. The proposed action eliminates the repetitive NEPA action required under this alternative. This alternative was eliminated from further consideration because reviewing annual transfer requests would not be an economical use of Government resources and would divert Reclamation staff from those transfers requiring more in-depth review.

No Action Alternative

Under the No Action Alternative, Reclamation would not approve the proposed action. The Transferors would be required to operate within the confines of the water supply under their long-term renewal contracts. This alternative was eliminated from further consideration because it is Reclamation's mandate under Section 3405(a) of the CVPIA to facilitate water transfers to assist California

urban areas, agricultural water users, and others in meeting their future water needs.

Affected Environment and Environmental Consequences

Physical Resources

Neither water delivery addressed in this Environmental Assessment (EA) in itself nor cumulative affects would substantially affect physical resources at the point of diversion, the conveyance facilities, or the place of use. Nor would the aggregate of such proposed transfers to date greatly affect the quantity of cold water available for temperature control in the Sacramento River. However, even small changes are of concern as a matter of principle and potentially as matters of fact during periods of drought. Therefore, it is necessary to look at both the cumulative affect and the affects of individual actions since the point of diversion can affect the analysis.

Over 85 percent of the 4,536 acre-feet of water proposed for transfer thus far from points of diversion below the Keswick Dam to points above the Keswick Dam involve diversion at the Shasta Dam. About 3 percent, or 140 acre-feet, would be diverted near Jones Valley where the potential for any measurable affect on the cold water pool is not expected. The 464-acre-foot transfer that is the subject of this EA, or about 10 percent, would be removed from the conduit conveying water from Whiskeytown Lake to the Sacramento River. Such a diversion would not directly affect the cold water pool in Shasta Lake itself, but it theoretically could have a small affect on the amount of cold water available in the Shasta-Whiskeytown-Trinity Lakes complex.

Assuming that water were to be removed from the Spring Creek Conduit and was not replaced by increased flows from Shasta or Whiskeytown Lakes, the water temperature of the Spring Creek Power Plant releases would increase an average of one to five-thousandths of a degree Fahrenheit during the April through July period. Since the Spring Creek Power Plant releases represent only an average of 8 percent of the total release from the Keswick Dam during this period, the impact of a 464-acre-foot long-term transfer on river temperatures downstream of the Keswick Dam is minor and likely not measurable. It certainly would be far too small to affect decisions about changes in the location of the compliance point for temperature control.

The transfer, which would be restricted to use of existing facilities, would only cause minor changes in the timing and amount of water diverted. This use of existing facilities and operations and the resulting absence of land use changes would prevent adverse affects on unique geological features such as wetlands,

wild or scenic rivers, refuges, floodplains, rivers placed on the Nationwide River Inventory, and prime or unique farmlands.

Even though the transferred water would be removed from the river upstream of the Keswick Dam, no impacts in the uppermost reaches of the Sacramento River would be associated with the transfer because the volume of water released through the Keswick Dam is generally determined during the summer by either fishery or Sacramento-San Joaquin Bay Delta water quality requirements, not by contractual demands. Therefore, approval of this transfer is not expected to affect either the timing or volume of releases from the Keswick Dam. This transfer would decrease the total volume of water diverted from the Sacramento River below impassable barriers, but would not measurably alter flows in the river at ACID's point of diversion.

Biological Resources

No negative impacts to upland plants or wildlife are anticipated as a result of new water diversion or distribution facilities. Changes will be associated with new developments supplied by this water, but the impacts of those changes have been addressed in a broad manner in the general plan development process and will be further addressed in development project-specific analyses under the California Environmental Quality Act. No changes in regional urban growth would occur that could not otherwise occur given the large supplies of groundwater available in the areas along Redding's southern border.

No changes are expected in the ACID service area as a result of this transfer as the bulk of ACID's water is derived from their senior water right as a Sacramento River Settlement Contractor.

Because there would be no physical change in ACID's service area as a result of the transfer and because potential habitat for listed species is rarely encountered in the Transferors' service areas, no affects on listed upland species are expected. No affect on listed aquatic species is expected for three reasons.

1. The water released through the Keswick Dam would not be affected by the transfer since factors other than contractual water demands usually determine the volumes released.

2. The ACID diversions are through modern screens which pose little risk to fish so the transfer would not lessen an existing hazard.

3. The Spring Creek Conduit point of diversion is upstream of impassable barriers and, therefore, does not affect listed fish species.

Cultural Resources

This project has no potential to affect historic properties because the transfer approved under this EA would use existing facilities and essentially existing operations. No new or additional construction would occur as a result of this transfer.

Indian Trust Assets

The transfer would not affect Indian Trust Assets under any of the alternatives.

Socioeconomics

The transfer would not affect the quality of human environment or public health or safety or involve unresolved conflicts concerning alternative uses of available resources under any of the alternatives because they essentially maintain present conditions. Minor shifts in the location of water use would occur, but they would be too small to noticeably affect regional economics.

The No Action Alternative could adversely affect the SCSD and its customers because it may not be able to otherwise meet water deficiencies in years of reduced allocations of CVP water.

The transfer would be consistent with the Department of the Interior's environmental justice guidelines, as the benefit would accrue to an urban area with a substantial number of lower income people. Thus, it would not preferentially favor nor discriminate against any disadvantaged socioeconomic groups.

Project Operations

Reclamation has determined that there would be no identifiable impacts to the CVP operations as a result of the transfer. Therefore, no impacts associated with water delivery or other impacts to the CVP operations are anticipated as a result of the proposed transfer under any of the alternatives.

Consultation and Coordination

No consultation under the Endangered Species Act with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) or the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) was required for this proposed transfer program because Reclamation determined this program would not affect any listed species. Transfers authorized under this program will be posted on the Internet at a site linked to Reclamation's Web site at **www.mp.usbr.gov** to allow NMFS and the Service to verify the continuing

appropriateness of Reclamation's actions with respect to the status of federally-listed species.